



People vs. Process

Acts 15:36-40

People vs. Process

- Several years back we had an individual show up in our service one morning with a need
 - He said he had a job waiting for him in Springfield the next day but had no transportation
 - He had to be there tomorrow or would lose it
 - He was not known in the community
 - The church did not have much money at that time
 - The church leaders met in the back of the old church after services to discuss
 - Two different mindsets quickly became evident – People people and Process people

People vs. Process

- Several years back we had an individual show up in our service one morning with a need
 - Process people had to work through their questions
 - Was there a real need
 - Can we trust him
 - Whatever the decision, does it change anything or just have the same issue tomorrow, next week...

People vs. Process

- Several years back we had an individual show up in our service one morning with a need
 - People persons were just interested in the how and now
 - Can we do a love offering or set up a list of people to drive him
 - What is the most the church can give
 - Just get this done now because he is hurting, and God calls us to help
 - We ended up purchasing a car for \$500 someone knew of and gave it to the man
 - We never heard from him again

People vs. Process

- This could have ended badly for the unity of our church
 - Process people weren't convinced it would make a difference or “never do that again” mindset
 - People persons could have been convinced we should have done more – new tires, pay for insurance....
 - All I can say is this church has never really had a money issue since then
- We see a similar People vs. Process issue mentioned in Scripture

Scripture

- **Acts 15:36-41 NIV**, 36 Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.” (*Process*)
 - 37 Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, (*People*) 38 but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. (*Process*)
 - 39 They had such a sharp disagreement (*heated, angry*) that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, 40 but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord. 41 He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

People vs. Process

- Savers vs. Spenders, Dreamers vs. Doers, Big Picture vs. Detail oriented – so many different types of people make up the church of Jesus Christ and all are needed
- Some of you here would have sided with Paul while others with Barnabas
- What I desire this morning is for each of us to crawl out of our own personality type and see the need for every other type and do what Paul said
 - **Romans 12:18 NIV**, “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”
 - **Ephesians 4:3 NIV**, “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”

People vs. Process

- Luke describes the rift in his typical understated way: “There arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other”
 - No elaboration, no circling back later to tell us how this story ended
 - No taking sides or saying who was wrong or right
 - No stirring the church pot or tarnishing each other’s name
 - We just watch Barnabas sail off to Cyprus with John Mark while Paul and Silas head to Syria and Cilicia
 - Friends whose names go together like David and Jonathan, or like Peter and John, Andy and Barney
 - I get a sense of something loss

People vs. Process

- Barnabas' birth name was Joseph
 - He was given his new name of Barnabas by those who knew him well, it means "son of encouragement"
 - Barnabas was sincere and generous and shared all of his profits, knowing his contribution would be distributed to anyone in need
 - He was quick with an encouraging word
 - He looked forward to the potential in a person's life rather than looking what has been

People vs. Process

- Barnabas having the Gift of Discernment was Paul's sponsor when he came to Jerusalem
 - **Acts 9:26-27 NIV**, 26 When he (*Paul*) came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus.

People vs. Process

- When Barnabas needed help ministering in Antioch he brought in Paul
 - **Acts 11:22-26 NIV**, 22 News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. 23 When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. 24 He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.
 - 25 Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, 26, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

People vs. Process

- Barnabas and Paul were selected by the Holy Spirit for the first missionary journey
 - **Acts 13:1-3 NIV**, 1 Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. 2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” 3 So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.
 - Notice the order of their names
 - **Acts 13:13 NIV**, From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem.

People vs. Process

- Paul was assigned the gift or position of Apostleship not by men but by the Holy Spirit
 - **Galatians 1:1 NIV**, Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by a man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead
- Paul was given the spiritual gifts of evangelism, discernment, and administration to establish churches

People vs. Process

- Paul was assigned the gift or position of Apostleship not by men but by the Holy Spirit
 - Paul whose mind was so sharp he could see the deep things of God and teach them
 - **2nd Peter 3:16 NIV**, He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.
- They loved and respected each other deeply but couldn't reconcile a disagreement over John Mark?

Barnabas, with John Mark, sailed to a place of healing – (*People*)

- Barnabas is not sailing to Cypris because he is mad at Paul, but because John Mark needs a familiar place to begin to recover from his failure
 - Barnabas made a “*People*” choice to begin mentoring John Mark like what he did with Paul
- Notice what Barnabas was giving up
 - Using his gift of discernment, you can almost hear John the Baptist’s words about Jesus
 - **John 3:30 NIV**, “He must become greater; I must become less.”
- All of us need a Barnabas to come along side us at times
 - **1st Thessalonians 5:11 NIV**, Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

Barnabas, with John Mark, sailed to a place of healing – *(People)*

- Notice how Barnabas left
 - No great fanfare, no harsh words, no disunity
 - He pointed his spiritual gifts in another ministry direction
 - Barnabas knew Paul no longer needed his mentoring, but John Mark did
 - It is difficult at times to let a ministry end when it is time

Barnabas, with John Mark, sailed to a place of healing – *(People)*

- Did it make a difference?
 - John Mark became a scribe for Peter giving us the Gospel of Mark
 - **2nd Timothy 4:9-11 NIV**, 9 Do your best to come to me quickly, 10 for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. 11 Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.

Paul, with Silas, established churches throughout Asia Minor – (*Process*)

- In his mission to proclaim the Good news of Jesus Christ, Paul set up at least 14 churches in Galatia, Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, Ephesus, ...
- Paul wrote 13 books of the New Testament, maybe 14 depending on Hebrews
- He became open to his struggles and God's grace
 - **1st Timothy 1:15-16 NIV**, 15 Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. 16 But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.

Paul, with Silas, established churches throughout Asia Minor – (*Process*)

- He became open to his struggles and God's grace
 - **Romans 7:22-24 NIV**, 22 For in my inner being I delight in God's law; 23 but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. 24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? 25 Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Paul, with Silas, established churches throughout Asia Minor – (*Process*)

- He became a very humble man
 - **Corinthians 2:1-5 NIV**, And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. 2 For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3 I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. 4 My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, 5 so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom (*me*), but on God's power.

So, what principles can we learn from Paul and Barnabas

- Recognize that the opportunity for disagreements will always exist
 - Robert Gonzales Jr., “If human finiteness or remaining sin could hinder the harmonious relationship of two godly men, it shouldn’t surprise us when godly believers strongly disagree and even separate in our own day.”
 - Here we have two men fully committed to Christ disagreeing over the application of biblical principles
 - Do we extend grace, love, and forgiveness – which means what?
 - Or be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves – which means what?

So, what principles can we learn from Paul and Barnabas

- Rest in God's providence to overrule such disagreements for good
 - The foolishness of God is wiser than men (*1st Cor. 1:25*)
 - Not all apparent failures are actual failures
- Remember that differences don't have to destroy love and respect
 - Despite sharp disagreement and even separation, Scripture seems to indicate that both parties continued to view one another as faithful brothers and to support one another's labors (*1st Cor. 9:5–6*)
- Don't allow your disagreement to be so firm that it can't be revised down the road
- Don't take everyone who disagrees with you off your prayer list

So, what principles can we learn from Paul and Barnabas

- **Ephesians 4:1-6 NIV**, As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. 2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. (*People*) 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. (*Process*) 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.



People vs. Process

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